

Thesis.

Why Study Economic Problems?

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Outline of Thesis.

- I. Evolution of Thought.
- II Wages or Incomes.
 - A. Benefits.
 - B. School Advantages.
- III Education of Kansas Farmer.
- IV Ohio Legislature.
 - A Its Intentions.
 - B. Mark Hanna.
 - c. Teachings.
- V Trusts.
 - A. Effects on Individuals.
 - B. Lawrence Wire Plant.
 - c. Rights of Trusts.

Why Study Economic Problems?

Evolution of thought is as inevitable as is the evolution of plants, animal, or individuals.

Only a few years ago, it was the idea of the colleges of the land, to teach Latin, Greek, French, German, and to the wisemen of those days they thought that these subjects were of the greatest importance to the student as they tended to develop his mind and give him a classical and literary education.

But today through a combination of circumstances, the people are beginning to see the value of a new field of study.

The scholars of today recognize the value of the above named studies as mind trainers and as developers of the reasoning power, but they also see that there is also another very important problem before us, and that is how to meet and solve successfully the great question of every day life as they present them

selves to each of us.

The study of Economics has to deal with those problems that confront an individual in every day business life, no matter what his location may be.

Is there any legitimate reason why an individual should not study his own surroundings, and become acquainted with the rules, business principles, and laws under which he is to work out a lively hood for himself and family?

One might naturally think that all the people would be of one mind in regard to this department of our education but we find that there is much and severe opposition to this line of thought.

In the United States the people are the bulwarks of popular government, and it is upon their intelligence, thrift and knowledge of these great questions, that the success of nation depends.

The question of wages is one that concerns each person in our nation to day, in as much as they either give or receive wages, and yet how few people know any thing about the several

different theories in regard to wages. Upon the wages or income, depends the sphere in social life, in regard to the enjoyment of the every day life.

The man who receives a good substantial income is not only able to provide well for his family in regard to the necessaries of life, but he is also able to give them an opportunity to go to school and college and there obtain the training that will aid them through life.

He is also able to permit them to enjoy society and its many advantages in regard to a higher plane of living and usefulness.

So we see that this question of wages is not only important to the one who receives them, but that it also has an untold influence on the lives of those with whom you are most intimately connected.

The Kansas farmer need to be an educated man, as he has more to contend ^{with} than any other man who conducts a business.

If he plants his crops too early, the

cold wave is liable to return and kill it. If he plants it too late, it will be killed by the drought. If he succeeds in evading these evils, the insects come into play, and attack and often ruin his entire crop. But if he is successful in evading all the above named attacks, he is compelled to sell on a market that is controlled by Bulls and Bears, and they gore him on one side and gnaw him on the other, and if he succeeds in living through all these difficulties, he at last falls into the hands of the moneyed men and has to do business on an irrational monetary system.

We are all more or less acquainted with the legislators of Kansas for several years back, and know that they have been men of the people, those who have been trying to serve their constituents, but if we made a study of the laws that have been passed during the last twenty years, we will find that the farmers and laboring men have not received the protection by

law that the Wealthier Class have.

We all know something of the power of a lobby in influencing legislation and altho the Kansas Legislators may not be under their control, they are undoubtedly under their influence.

This furnishes a good illustration of the effects that a lobby and moneyed men may have on a Legislature in leading it off to those things that are contrary to the principles on which it was elected and contrary to the convictions of the members of the legislature.

The legislature is supposed to be made up of men who are chosen directly by the people, and they are chosen with the idea that they shall represent the people in all their undertaking, but yet too often is this not true. The trusts, cooperations, combines, think it perfectly legitimate to bribe and buy the members, and thus thwart the interests of the people who elected them.

The Ohio Legislature that elected Mr. M. A. Hanna to the United States Senate contained many men who

showed their intention of doing what was right for the masses, in their hard fight against the moneyed power and the enemies that attacked them from all sides. These intelligent and honest men were determined to do the right, and were nearly successful in their undertakings.

They undertook to defy the trusts, cooperations, and combines by defeating their leader and advance agent Mr. M. A. Hanna. They undertook to regulate the railroads charges, and discriminations in freight rates charges and reduce transportation from three to two cents per mile. It attempted to do away with the patronage of the office seeker. It attempted to pass laws that would regulate city government. It grappled with the question of taxation, temperance and education.

So we see that this legislature endeavored to pass laws on these questions that are of vital importance to the people in every day life; and yet these honest men of the people were not able to succeed.

when confronted with the combined money power and its unbounded influence.

Is this not a very important reason why the people should study these economic problems, and acquaint themselves with some of the influences that are brought to bear on the men who are chosen to represent ^{them} in the making of the laws of the land?

At the beginning of the session, the newspaper men from far and near, sent their Reporters to the Capital City and heralded the news of the great success that Mr. M. A. Hanna was meeting with by the use of his money in securing his election to a seat in the United States Senate.

When the fight was at its highest, and Mr. Hanna was not certain of his election he sent a call to all the postmasters of Ohio, to meet him, immediately, in the Capital City, and there do personal work on the legislators of their respective districts in behalf of Marcus A. Hanna.

They responded at once, and swarmed about the legislators on the street corners, went to their rooms in the hotels;

and in the Capital Building, they demanded that they elect the man upon whom their position and future success depended x.

Most of the Ohio people were opposed to the election of Mr M. A. Hanna to the United States Senate, and this is well illustrated, in the fact that the Republicans legislators who were now to be in favor of Mr Hanna were either defeated or elected by a small majority x. So at present a seat in the United States Senate is held by a man who is not the choice of the people of Ohio, but he succeeded in landing himself there by his own individual efforts x.

Is it not high time when one man by his individual efforts has gained sufficient power, politically and financially to enable him to thwart the interest of the people of a great state that the people make a study of the questions that concern them in everyday life; and learn those principles and methods by which these men of power do business? This is a day and age of trusts and

Combinations x In 1898, the large Manufacturing establishments, street railways, lighting plants, and water works have been combining into gigantic combinations, the capital of which foots up to the enormous sum of \$957,857,000.00 x

Every farmer who raises beef is compelled to sell it to a trust that has accumulated \$125,000,000.00 capital with which to control the meat supply x

Each family who buys a gallon of oil is compelled to buy it from a combination having \$100,000,000.00 with which to regulate the output x

Every person who uses sugar is compelled to buy it from a cooperation which has succeeded in gaining control of \$75,000,000.00 capital stock.

In 1888 combinations have been formed on the necessities of life - viz. lumber, lamps, hay, fish, candy, linseed, oil, thread, shingles, mattresses, steel, wire, canned goods, beer, whiskey, starch, scissors and envelopes x In the year 1899 prunes have been added to the list, and only a few days ago, bananas were

added to the list thus putting the price of them up, ten cents per dozen here in Manhattan.

Now add to these the wire establishment that Congressman Bower-sock of Lawrence sold to the combination, and we will see that the trusts and moneyed power, are fast getting control of the necessities of life, and are not managing them in the interest of the consumer and the common people.

Does it not behoove the common people to study and gain some education on these questions that are so essential and important to them in every day life? If these business principles, rules and laws, that are being used by the trusts, work so successfully, would it not be a pious idea to educate all the people along these lines of thought, so that they may be able to study and solve the problems of every day life as they present themselves to each individual?

When we begin to study these great questions, we find that these trusts are not only working in our sister states

but that they have also reached our own fair state of Kansas and are playing a very important part in her industrial field by gaining control of the barbed wire plant at Lawrence.

Mr. Henley, has succeeded in managing the business successfully, to himself, and to the farmers of Kansas, and yet he is compelled to sell out to a combine who had started in to ruin him financially and close up his business. So, to save his capital invested, he sold out to a trust at a price that netted him nothing above his actual investment. No sooner had the trust gained control of the plant, than they began to close it up and stop its outputs and by so doing they threw two hundred men out of employment.

This well illustrates the ~~wholly~~ ^{wholly}ness of trusts and the assertion that they are invariably in the interest of the people by giving steady and remunerative wages and greater opportunities of getting work. The public is not aware of any reason, why this plant should

be shut down, as it has always been successful in its management, and it was stated that only a short time ago, a few of the traveling men had to be called in from soliciting orders until the plant could be able to fill some of the orders already in hand.

The Kansas farmers are now compelled to buy in the east where trusts do exist and competition is shut out and they are farther compelled to pay the excessive freight rate charges that must be necessary in the transportation of the wire from the eastern establishments to the local markets in Kansas. Such action as these command the immediate attention and study of the people, as they are of much interest and of great importance to all those who are now in connection with the trusts.

When a few individuals have gained sufficient power to enable them, to thwart, and throw several hundred laborers out of employment, and compel them to go else where seeking work

it is high time that the people were learning about the Living Rights of Trusts."

Numerous other illustrations and examples could be sighted, showing the relation of the common people to the great questions that are at issue in every day life, but enough have been given to show, that the people need to gain some education, either through the colleges of the land or by a series of campaign education that is continually in progress. *